

Public Water System Capacity Grants Solicitation Notice 2004

Full Text Announcement

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I Funding Opportunity Description

The purpose of this grant program is to fund training and activities that build tribal capacity in the technical, managerial and financial components of running a Public Water System (PWS). We encourage tribes to select activities that are achievable within a one- to two-year time frame and to work closely with the appropriate project officer listed under Section VII Agency Contacts in developing proposals and workplans. This announcement provides guidance on the preparation of workplan proposals, including examples of fundable projects.

II Award Information

EPA Region 9 funds totaling approximately \$200,000 will be, or are, available to tribes for awarding PWS capacity grants. Proposals will be accepted in three time periods or cycles, with the first deadline on **March 12, 2004**. Following this there will be a second cycle with a proposal deadline of **August 12, 2004**, and third cycle with a proposal deadline of **November 12, 2004**.

III Eligibility Information

Who Is Eligible - Funding is available for all federally recognized Tribes, Tribal consortiums, or non-profit agencies that would provide capacity building assistance associated with specific Tribal public water systems.

What is Eligible - Project Proposal Limitations & Requirements - Based on our experience with this program, we anticipate being able to fund the majority of eligible proposals for all three cycles; however, second- and third-cycle funding decisions will be based on monies remaining from the previous cycle(s). Selection of any proposal will also be based on a comparative ranking (see Section V, Initial Proposal Review and Ranking Information) with other competing projects for that funding cycle. Completed proposals, including a budget, a workplan, and any other supporting material must be postmarked by the deadlines noted above to be considered for the respective cycle of funding (first cycle by March 12, 2004, etc.). EPA will notify all Tribes in writing whether or not their proposal has been recommended for award.

Please Note: Proposal/workplan ranking criteria and guidance for preparing a proposal are described in the remainder of this announcement, but the following limitations and prerequisites are highlighted here for your attention in considering

your participation in this program:

(1) This grant program is different from the General Assistance Act (formerly referred to as multi-media) program, the Clean Water Act (Section 106) grant programs, and the development grant awards received by Tribes under "Treatment-as-a-State" provisions. **Proposals for funding the activities that these programs support may not be considered for funding under this program.**

(2) **Routine compliance monitoring is not eligible for funding.** Further, these funds may not be used for activities that are the function of a water utility, such as normal operation and maintenance, or facility construction projects. However, reasonable project feasibility studies for systems that have compliance or other health risk issues may be considered for funding.

(3) Feasibility Study proposals submitted for funding with Drinking Water Tribal Set Aside (DWTSA) funds may automatically be transferred, by this Office, for competitive ranking under the PWS Capacity Grant program, if they have ranked high enough for funding under the DWTSA program. The decision to do this will be done when transfer results in funding more eligible projects than could otherwise occur. If your proposal is to be transferred, you will be notified. If your feasibility study proposal does not rank high enough for funding under DWTSA, there is no automatic transfer, but you may resubmit it for consideration under this program, providing it meets criteria outlined in this solicitation notice and proposal cycle deadlines.

(4) **Exploratory work of any kind for development of new drinking water sources is not eligible for funding.**

(5) If a PWS has not completed all the required chemical monitoring, or has frequent violations under the total coliform rule (including all monitoring, reporting and public notice regulation), the applicant **must include a detailed plan for completing chemical monitoring and/or meeting the total coliform rule requirements along with the grant proposal to be considered for funding.** Compliance with SDWA monitoring requirements demonstrates a commitment to responsible utility management which underlies the intent of several of the ranking criteria.

(6) **If a Tribe does not have a certified operator, the proposal must include activities to facilitate operator certification.**

(7) **Costs incurred prior to award, will not be reimbursed with grant funds.**

(8) **Proposals must provide detailed information that demonstrates Tribal**

capability to administer the grant. Staff qualifications and/or previous successful grant-funded projects demonstrating ability to carry out the project and comply with all grant requirements (including reporting to EPA) may be included.

(9) Please note that all deliverables submitted during the application process and during grant performance periods will be considered public information and releasable under the Freedom of Information Act, unless the Tribe claims confidentiality and EPA concurs with a confidentiality determination.

Examples of Fundable Projects - These are just a few examples of many possible projects; consult with your project officer (See Section VII Agency Contacts) regarding your ideas for a proposal:

A. Training Projects

1. Preparation courses for water operator certification exams.
2. Water board/utility management training.
3. Training in specific water system operation and maintenance functions (distribution, pumps, disinfection, electrical systems, etc).

B. Utility Management/Regulation Projects

1. Develop or modify a water utility organization, including organizational structure, by-laws, rate structure, shut-off policy, billing methods, etc.
2. Develop tribal codes and ordinances for water service, and for ground water well and surface water intake construction (possibly also plumbing codes and ordinances.)
3. Develop tribal enforcement structure and authority for enforcement of water service and ground water well construction /abandonment ordinances and codes, etc.
4. Develop a cross-connection control program.
5. Develop well abandonment policy or ordinances.
6. Conduct an inventory of tribal water system(s) including locations, system mapping, compliance status, monitoring schedules, backup equipment/parts, etc.
7. Develop a compliance tracking/data management system for drinking water systems.
8. Prepare feasibility studies for drinking water infrastructure improvements to existing PWS facilities where demonstrated health risks exist, or where sanitary deficiencies have been well documented. Feasibility studies should generally be able to support funding proposals for construction under available federal programs (e.g., Drinking Water Tribal Set Aside

Grants, USDA Rural Development, etc.- note Feasibility Study Guidance for such programs). Funding for feasibility study work under this program is generally limited to a range of \$15,000 - \$25,000.

IV Initial Proposal Submission Information

Grant Proposal/Workplan Guidelines - Format and Content

A Background/Introduction - The proposal should open with a brief introduction that includes the following information:

1 Reservation location; acreage; current PWS water supply sources and systems (groundwater or surface water, number of wells, tanks etc.); commercial, public and residential populations served; number of service connections; system ownership (e.g., tribal, private); operator status (training, certifications). Maps and schematics should be attached.

2 Description of tribal or inter-tribal utilities or consortia that are involved with management of the water system(s). If there are no formal utility structures, describe how system(s) are operated and maintained, and how decisions about infrastructure management are made. Include information about how system operation and maintenance is paid for (e.g., users billed, tribal revenues).

3 Any additional information which you believe will help EPA proposal reviewers to understand the need for your project, its relationship to providing a safe reliable source of drinking water, and **how you believe Tribal capacity is increased by the project.**

4 Description of the status of your system's compliance with chemical and bacteriological monitoring requirements; next scheduled monitoring for chemical contaminants (contact your EPA project officer contact if you have questions about this).

B Project Proposal/Workplan - The proposal should include a detailed description of the work to be undertaken, the objectives to be accomplished, funding required for each task, the amount of time devoted to each task, the time schedule by which tasks are to be started and completed, and the staff person responsible for completing the task. Clearly state the deliverables to be submitted during the course of the project, including the due dates.

1. Provide a **description** of the project and how it will serve the community. Enumerate the tasks or activities that are involved with a brief description of each, including outputs and results.

2 Include quarterly and final progress reporting to EPA as a separate task in the workplan proposal. Quarterly and final reports should include, at a minimum, the following items:

- ! Update progress **status** for each workplan task
- ! Explain/describe delays or **problems**
- ! **Update schedules/deadlines**, if they have changed
- ! Summary of incurred **costs** by task category
- ! **Attach deliverables** as identified in workplan

3 Develop a **schedule** that identifies the time to complete each task and the schedule for completion. Deadlines for draft and final products or deliverables should be built in to the schedule.

4 Provide a **budget** breakdown of the project costs. Associate costs with each activity or task; identify funding sources (tribal share, EPA share, other, etc.). Note whether the tribe is currently being funded by other EPA grant programs.

5 Identify the **staff** that will conduct the tasks/activities funded and their qualifications. If training or hiring of staff is required, the specific training or hiring mechanism and time-frames should be identified. If the applicant intends to contract for the proposed tasks, a clear justification of how this will help develop tribal infrastructure and capability should be provided.

6 Project **deliverables or results** should be clearly defined and associated with a schedule and deadlines.

V Initial Proposal Review and Ranking Information

Proposal selection will be based on completeness (see Section IV Initial Proposal Submission Information) and on meeting the eligibility requirements (See Section III Eligibility Information) Selection of any proposal will also be based on a comparative ranking with other competing projects as outlined below:

Proposal Review and Ranking Process

*Total Possible Score 96 Points

*Ratings: High=3 Medium=2 Low=1 None=0

*Score = (Weight) X (Rating)

Weighting Criteria:

Weight 6	Demonstration of public health need and ability of project to meet that need.
Weight 5	Specific output/products in Workplan.
Weight 4	Specific realistic (well-researched and supported by detail) budget, schedule and scope of work (workplan).
Weight 5	Project will increase tribal technical, managerial, or financial capacity as it relates to the public water system. The more detail provided in support of any assertion will result in a higher weighting.
Weight 7	Safe Drinking Water Act compliance monitoring is up to date <u>prior to submission of proposal</u> .
Weight 5	Proposal indicates commitment to, or includes tasks, that will develop increased capacity to operate and maintain a self-sufficient public water system. Examples of such tasks are rate structure development, backflow prevention training/measures, development of formal maintenance programs, or emergency response plans.

VI Award Administration

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Proposals that are selected for continuance in the process will be sent an application kit for funding and notified of any applicable deadlines for submitting a revised proposal/workplan and a completed application kit. Receipt of an application kit is not a guarantee of funding. Deadlines must be met and the work plan must be approved by the EPA Project Officer for funding to occur.

Regulations governing the award follow: State, Tribal and local government entities will follow 40 CFR, Part 31. In addition, States will follow 40 CFR Part 35, sub-part A and Tribal Governments will follow 40 CFR Part 35, sub-part B. States and Tribal Governments will follow OMB Circular A-87. All others will follow 40 CFR Part 30. Universities will follow OMB Circular A-21 and non-profits will follow OMB Circular A-122.

Those submitting proposals should clearly mark information they consider confidential, and EPA

will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Part 2, Subpart B.

Any disputes will be resolved in accordance with 40 CFR 30.36 and Part 31, Subpart F.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and not make an award.

VII Agency Contacts

EPA Grant Project Officers by Geographical Area of Coverage:

Southern and Central California - Helen McKinley, (415) 972-3559
mckinley.helen@epa.gov

**Tohono O'odham, Owen's Valley,
Northern California, and Nevada** - Roger Yates, (415) 972-3549
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Western Arizona, Las Vegas & Kaibab-Paiute - Karl Banks, (415) 972-3557
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Hopi - Kevin Ryan, (415) 972-3554
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San Carlos, Gila River & Ak-Chin, White Mountain - Danny Collier, (415) 972-3565
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